

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 AID-05 DHA-02 EB-07 HEW-04 IO-13

SCS-03 SCA-01 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6088

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY CH

SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE SITUATION

REF: (A) PEKING 1439, (B) PEKING 1431, (C) PEKING 1426

1. AS OF 1600 LOCAL TIME JULY 30, AFTERSHOCK PREDICTED EARLY THIS MORNING IN PEKING AREA (REF B) HAS NOT OCCURRED. POPULATION CAMPED IN ALONG STREETS IN OPEN AIR HAS DECREASED SOMEWHAT SINCE THIS MORNING, BUT LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE ARE STILL LIVING OUTDOORS, AND EVIDENTLY EXPECT TO REMAIN THERE FOR SEVERAL MORE DAYS. FAMILY SHELTERS HAVE SPRUNG UP EVEN ON SOUTHERN EDGE OF TIEN AN MEN SQUARE AND APPROACHED TO NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM. RESIDENTS OF PEKING HOTEL ARE STILL BEING ALLOWED ONLY TEMPORARY ACCESS TO UPSTAIRS ROOMS, WHILE JAPANESE REPORT THAT SOME RESIDENTS OF HSINCHIAO HOTEL HAVE BEEN REMOVED TO WORKERS' PALACE OF CULTURE. NEITHER THESE NOR MOST OTHER MAJOR BUILDINGS IN PEKING SHOW ANY OBVIOUS SIGNS OF STRUCTURAL DAMAGE.

2. MOST RAIL LINES IN AREA APPEAR TO BE IN GOOD CONDITION, INCLUDING PEKING-TIENTSIN-SHANGHAI LINE, WHICH WAS USED TO

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EVACUATE SOME FOREIGNERS FROM TIENTSIN JULY 28 AND ON WHICH A

USLO FAMILY ARRIVED FROM SHANGHAI JULY 30. SOME PEKING STORES WHICH REMAINED CLOSED YESTERDAY HAVE REOPENED. NUMBER OF PERSONS GOING TO AND FROM WORK HAS INCREASED A GREAT DEAL, BUT CONSIDERABLE PROPORTION OF CITY LABOR FORCE STILL APPEARS TO BE IDLE, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS AT FACTORIES AND OFFICES LOCATED IN MULTI-STORY BUILDINGS.

3. THE TIENTSIN PHARMACEUTICALS FAIR HAS BEEN CLOSED, AND FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN ARE FINDING IT NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE TO CONDUCT ANY BUSINESS IN PEKING. MOST ARE BEING ENCOURAGED BY THEIR CHINESE COUNTERPARTS TO LEAVE THE CITY, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF CHAOTIC HOUSING SITUATION. CONGRESSIONAL STAFF DEL WAS SENT AWAY FROM PEKING JULY 29, A DAY AHEAD OF ORIGINAL SCHEDULE. WE UNDERSTAND CHINA TRAVEL SERVICE IS STRIKING PEKING FROM ITINERARIES OF TRAVELLERS NOW IN SUTH CHINA.

4. THE JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN WHO SURVIVED THE TOTAL COLLAPSE OF THEIR HOTEL IN TANGSHAN HAVE REPORTED THAT THE CITY WAS VERY HEAVILY DAMAGED. WHILE THEIR OBSERVATIONS WERE FREGMENTARY AT BEST, THEY DREW CONCLUSION THAT TOLL OF DEAD AND WOUNDED THERE MUST HAVE BEEN HEAVY. SOME MODERN BUILDINGS, INCLUDING ONE GUEST HOUSE AND THE HOSPITAL WHERE THEY WERE INITIALLY TREATED, SURVIDED MORE OR LESS INTACT, BUT MOST OF THE REST WERE REDUCED TO RUBBLE. THEY THEMSELVES WERE EVACUATED FROM TANGSHAN TO PEKING BY HELICOPTER. THERE IS STILL NO WORD ON THEIR TWO MISSING COLLEAGUES (REF C), AND CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAVE THUS FAR NOT RESPONDED TO JAPANESE REQUESTS FOR EMBASSY PERSONNEL TO JOIN SEARCH FOR THEIR REMAINS.

5. FOREIGNERS IN PEITAIHO (NONE INJURED) WERE EVACUATED TO PEKING BY SPECIAL PLANE JULY 29. CONTRARY TO FIRST REPORTS, THIS CITY ALSO SUFFERED SOME DAMAGE, BUT WE DO NOT YET HAVE A REPORT ON EXTENT.

6. IN SUM, FRAGMENTARY REPORTS PAINT GRIM PICTURE OF TANGSHAN AREA, WHILE THE PEKING SCENE IS CHARACTERIZED BY MASSIVE INCONVENIENCE BUT RELATIVELY LIMITED DESTRUCTION.
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